



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center and Gardens

570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100

Los Angeles, California 90065

Phone (323) 221-9944 Fax (323) 221-9934

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: August 4, 2004, 3pm

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VII: Consideration of resolution adopting Mitigated Negative Declaration for Deerlake Highlands Addition Access Easement project, Devil Canyon, unincorporated Los Angeles County**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution adopting a final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Reporting Program for the Deerlake Highlands Addition access easement project in the unincorporated Chatsworth area.

Background: At its July 7, 2004 meeting, the Governing Board adopted the attached resolution (04-102) authorizing conditional granting of an access easement over Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) property along the northern boundary of Deerlake Highlands for the benefit of property owners located in the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 6 Township 2 North, Range 16 West, San Bernardino Meridian in Deerlake Highlands Addition portion of Devil Canyon.

The main condition to clear before granting the subject access easement was to complete a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review that shows that the public and ecological benefit of the MRCA obtaining fee title to the approximately 45 acres of County-owned land among the subject properties, on balance outweighs the potential adverse impacts of granting a 36-foot-wide easement for access and utilities (as shown on the attached figures) across the 10-foot-wide strip to benefit the subject properties in the Deerlake Addition area.

Also as recommended by the Governing Board, staff met with the applicant, three concerned community members, and the Senior Field Deputy for the 5th Supervisorial District. Furthermore, a field trip to the site is scheduled just prior to the August 4th Governing Board meeting. The proposed 10-foot-deep and 36-foot-wide easement will be marked on the site for the field visit.

The attached Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared by a consultant under staff's direction. Notice was posted at the site, published for three days in the

Daily News legal notices section, and posted at the County Clerks office. The comment period for the document is from July 13 to August 2, 2004. Any comments received up until the August 4th Governing Board meeting will analyzed and distributed to the Governing Board members. As of July 30, 2004 no comments have been received on the MND.

The only mitigation measure in the document is to ensure that the MRCA acquires fee title to the approximately 45 acres of County-owned land among the subject properties in the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 6 Township 2 North, Range 16 West. The \$100,000 of funding for this purchase will come from the Chatsworth Presidio Partners, LLC. That check to the County has already been cut. The Real Estate Division of the County's Chief Administrative Office has produced letters to staff regarding the contents of a purchase agreement.

The west half of the northwest quarter of Section 6 Township 2 North, Range 16 West, San Bernardino Meridian in Devil Canyon contains a marbled mix of Los Angeles County-owned property and private properties. Those properties will from herein be referred to as the "subject properties." The attached maps show which of those properties are owned by the County. All of the subject properties recently burned and are integral to the core habitat of the Santa Susana Mountains.

To staff's knowledge, none of the subject parcels have recorded legal access. The majority of the subject parcels are too steep to build on. A couple of the properties can be reached by dirt roads that cross MRCA property on the southern, northern and eastern boundaries of the subject properties. The MRCA's 10-foot-wide strip of land along the entire northern boundary of the Deerlake Ranch project (Deerlake Highlands) runs along the southern boundary of the block of subject properties.